

nations such as Bolivia and Argentina. Also, many of the school's graduates have lost their lives while combating the Narco-guerrillas and drug lords in Colombia and Peru.

These counterdrug operations are of vital interest to the safety and security of our Nation as the efforts of these brave Latin American soldiers are aimed at reducing the flow of drugs into the United States of America. This Member feels it would be a disservice to brand all the school's graduates as criminals because of the misdeeds of a very few.

The School of the Americas was established to heighten the professionalism of military establishments throughout Latin America. While the early focus of the institution during the Cold War was on combating Soviet-backed insurgencies, in recent years the school's emphasis has primarily shifted towards counterdrug operations to combat drug trafficking. The SOA curriculum also provides training in medical assistance, humanitarian and civil assistance, demining operations, peacekeeping operations, and most importantly human rights training.

One very positive result of the recent exposure of the school has been a much greater emphasis on human rights. They now expose every student at the school to a rigorous formal and informal training program on basic human rights. Specific classes and case studies are used to enhance the training and to make U.S. concerns unambiguously clear. The roles and rights of civilians, clergy, human rights observers, and U.N. personnel are integrated into the training program.

While the SOA has subsequently increased its emphasis on human rights, this Member believes that there is a basic value in encouraging young Latin-American military officers to study and train in the United States. An institution such as the SOA, which annually hosts 1,300 students from almost 20 countries, provides a level of professional training that is not otherwise available. Moreover, exposure to the U.S. lifestyle, values, and ideals offers important lessons for the future military leaders of Latin America.

There have been many false allegations in the past regarding the School of the Americas, such as the alleged existence of SOA torture manuals. This Member can assure my colleagues that there are no such manuals. This Member has contacted the Department of the Army, and the Department confirmed that such manuals do not exist. The SOA does not in any way engage in or endorse such heinous activities. Regarding the allegations that the SOA trains death squads and assassins, this Member can assure my colleagues that this is not true. The SOA is run by Officers of the United States Army that must operate the school in accordance with the governing regulations of the U.S. Army, the Department of Defense, and U.S. Public Law. Therefore, this Member can readily assure my colleagues that the SOA is not operating a training camp for death squads and assassins. The curriculum of the SOA is based on U.S. Military doctrine and practices, and uses the same materials from courses presented to U.S. military personnel. It is really outrageous that some people would tell such lies and sad that any Americans would believe such lies.

In April, a member of my staff traveled to Ft. Benning, Georgia, with a staff delegation from the House Committee on National Security on a fact finding tour of the SOA. The staff dele-

gation received a briefing on the entire curriculum currently being taught at the school. My staff member, with the aid of a translator, was able to engage in dialogue with a group of Latin American enlisted soldiers and asked questions about the type of training they were receiving from the SOA. The soldiers were from various countries such as El Salvador, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Columbia, Venezuela, and Mexico. My staff member noted that all of the soldiers were proud to have been chosen to represent their respective countries at the SOA. Many of these soldiers will return to their home and train other soldiers that could not attend the SOA in the proper application of U.S. military doctrine, human rights, and democracy. In addition, my staff member observed no improprieties in the training being given to students during the staff delegation visit. In fact, the School of the Americas readily welcomes both its proponents and opponents to visit the school to gain a better understanding of the type of programs being taught at the school.

While, this Member cannot guarantee that no graduate of the SOA will ever abuse human rights or undermine civilian government. What this Member can guarantee is that every effort will continue to be made to fully indoctrinate the students on respect for human rights and democracy at the U.S. Army School of the Americas. The training at this school undoubtedly does far, far more good to encourage appropriate human rights practices than any possible harm that could come from even a perversion of such an educational program some student might practice. This Member feels that it is really time for the congressional and religious opponents of the SOA to abandon this misguided attack on the SOA that misleads so many well-intentioned Americans who write their Senators and Congressmen.

#### IN HONOR OF OSCAR VIDAL BENITEZ

#### HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 10, 1998*

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Oscar Vidal Benitez, a true Cuban American hero and outstanding International Lions Club member.

In 1950, Mr. Benitez joined the Lion's Club in Bayamo, Cuba. Once in the club he set out to be a driving force in Lionism. By 1958 he was President of the local club and eventually he became Governor of an entire region of clubs in Cuba. He became well known for his work for the blind by becoming Director of the Rehabilitation for the Blind Program.

Like so many Cubans, he was forced to flee his homeland and settled in the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area. Once in America, while attempting to adjust to his new country, he began his work for the Lion's Club almost immediately. In 1963 he founded and became President of the New York Lion's Club of Cubans in Exile. Mr. Benitez fought to get the club recognized by the International Lions Club and eventually the club branched out to form many active Lions Clubs in the metropolitan area.

Next, Oscar Vidal Benitez moved to Miami where he was founded and President of the

Miami Buena Vista Lions Club. In 1971, this club was recognized internationally for gaining one of the largest increases in membership in the world.

In total, Mr. Benitez is responsible for the founding of 15 Lions clubs in the United States and since joining the Lions in 1950, he has never missed a meeting. Mr. Benitez has been internationally recognized for his contributions to Lionism. He has received many President's and Governor's medals of appreciation, he was inducted by the International Board of Directors as a Life Member of Lions International and he has been honored as a Member of the World Humanitarian Fraternity Melvin Jones Fellowship on three separate occasions. Mr. Benitez has done an incredible job of spreading Lionism by starting new clubs, attracting new members and raising money for charity, but his most lasting contributions on behalf of the Lions Club may be his work with the blind.

Mr. Benitez is a life member of the Florida Lions Eye Bank Century Club and the Conklin Center for the Blind and he has received a Presidential Honor for his work with the Lions Home for the Blind, Inc. He is also the founder of the Home for the Blind Foundation which is now funded by Dade County.

On Wednesday, June 10, the West New York Lions Club will honor Oscar Vidal Benitez for his incredible contributions to Lionism and to the community. The West New York Lions Club is the largest in New Jersey and it traces its roots to the New York Lion's Club of Cubans in Exile which Mr. Benitez founded when he first came to the United States.

In closing I would like to thank Mr. Oscar Vidal Benitez for his outstanding work on behalf of the Lions Club. His work across two countries and three states will never be forgotten.

#### RECOGNIZING THE MORRIS ARCHITECTS

#### HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 10, 1998*

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I, Congresswoman JACKSON-LEE, submit the following document concerning the Congressional Recognition of Morris Architects.

#### CONGRESSIONAL RECOGNITION OF MORRIS ARCHITECTS

Whereas, Morris Architects was founded in 1938, S.I. Morris and Talbot Wilson sixty years ago, and;

Whereas, throughout the last sixty years, Morris Architects has served the city of Houston and the great state of Texas in fields of entertainment, government, education and health care architectural work and;

Whereas, Morris Architects have always been on the cutting edge of providing monumental landmarks and economic development throughout the United States and;

Whereas, the Alpha Kappa Omega Chapter has always maintained the highest level of excellence, evidenced by the more than sixty awards won by Morris Architects in the last twenty years, to establish a higher standard of life for the residents of Houston and the United States.

Now therefore, be it resolved that Morris Architects, a firm that has prospered

through diversification, expansion and a solid commitment to high quality architectural design, is a valued and recognized leader in the world of architecture and the Houston community. Furthermore, be it resolved that Morris Architects continually improves the quality of life through their visionary and innovative architectural works that create a lasting impression on Houston and other cities.

THE HONORABLE CLIFF STEARNS,  
M.C. HONEST BALANCED BUDGET  
ACT OF 1998

**HON. CLIFF STEARNS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 10, 1998*

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I want to let my colleagues know about legislation I have introduced called the "Honest Balanced Budget Act of 1998." It is identical to the bill introduced by Senator FAIRCLOTH earlier this year.

The Social Security Trust Fund's surplus shouldn't be used to fund other programs. AND it should not be used to mask our nation's debt.

Did you know that the Social Security Trust Fund will be running a \$100,000,000,000 Surplus for fiscal year 1999? How is this possible when we keep hearing that the Trust Fund is in trouble?

Let's restore the trust for our seniors. We must ensure that the purpose for which the trust fund was set up is not violated.

No other bill does this this simply.

HONORING ARCHBISHOP SUMBAT  
LAPAJIAN FOR A LIFETIME OF  
PUBLIC SERVICE

**HON. JAMES E. ROGAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 10, 1998*

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, our nation is as diverse in character as it is in geography. Our communities are held together by faith, spirit, and a commitment to a bright future for our children. Recently many of my constituents celebrated an important anniversary by saluting a prominent religious leader who has exemplified those values. Today, I echo those same sentiments by honoring the life's work of Archbishop Sumbat Lapajian.

A native of Beirut, Sumbat was ordained to the priesthood in 1958 and began a distinguished career of public service. His work was recognized by his peers, and he was soon appointed to serve as rector at the Armenian Apostolic Holy Cross Church of Los Angeles, a position he held until June of 1973 when he was consecrated Bishop by His Holiness Khoren I of Cilicia.

Already well established in his own parish, his work in our community continued to expand. Bishop Lapajian was instrumental in establishing after school and weekend programs for children and worked throughout Southern California to build a strong faith-based educational system. He also worked to build from the ground up three of the largest Armenian Apostolic churches in the Los Angeles area, of which one, St. Mary's Church, is in my home-

town of Glendale, California. All continue to flourish today.

In April of 1981, Bishop Lapajian was honored by Catholicos Khoren I with the title of Archbishop in the Armenian Apostolic Church—one of its highest honors.

Mr. Speaker, for 40 years, Sumbat Lapajian has dedicated himself to educating our youth, comforting the sick, inspiring students, and unconditionally working for others. His faith, devotion, and life's work are an inspiration to us all. For his lessons of love, compassion, and humility, and in honor of his lifetime of public service, I ask my colleagues here today to join me in saluting His Eminence Archbishop Sumbat Lapajian.

TRIBUTE TO HEIDY PEREZ

**HON. JOHN F. TIERNEY**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 10, 1998*

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to salute Ms. Heidy Perez of Lynn, Massachusetts who has received an award from the Lynn Hispanic Scholarship Fund, Inc. for academic excellence.

I hope Heidy appreciates and is proud of her accomplishments. She has continually challenged herself and graduated sixth in her class. By not taking the easy path, she has given herself the tools to advance her hopes for the future. I trust that she understands the value of continuing her education and hope that she will continue her hard work. In choosing nursing as a career path, she is following her desire to provide care to many who need it most, and I have no doubt she will do so with compassion. Her dedication and commitment are to be commended, and I am certain that she will be successful in her future endeavors.

Indeed, Ms. Perez has worked hard to achieve her goals. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand here to recognize the accomplishments of Heidy Perez, and I hope my colleagues will join with me today in wishing Ms. Perez the very best as she continues her education.

THE HIGHWAY BILL

**HON. LEE H. HAMILTON**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 10, 1998*

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, June 3, 1998 into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

IMPROVING OUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Last week, Congress, with my support, significantly boosted investment in our nation's transportation system by passing a six-year highway bill. This bill increases federal funding for transportation by 40%, and provides special funding for key projects in southern Indiana, including the Ohio River bridges project in the greater Louisville area and the U.S. 231 project in Spencer County. This highway bill will improve the quality of services throughout our state, and is one of the most important pieces of legislation for Indiana in decades.

The measure includes funding for construction and maintenance of highways and

bridges, highway safety programs, and expansion of mass transit systems. It will also help improve air quality, enhance recreational bike and pedestrian trails, assist current and former welfare recipients get to work, and further innovative "intelligent transportation" projects to help move our transportation system into the 21st century.

The transportation bill is of vital importance to Indiana. Maintaining the 93,198 miles of highway in Indiana is a difficult challenge, but the highway bill will help us improve the network of roads and bridges in our state.

THE NEED FOR GOOD ROADS

Indiana is known as the "crossroads of America", a few other states are as dependent on highways. Economic development is not possible without good infrastructure. It helps businesses grow and expand and means more jobs for Hoosiers. I often hear from Hoosier business leaders about how the improvement of a local road has helped community businesses and community development.

Across our state, however, we can see a lot of problems with the condition of our roads. According to one recent study, 57% of Indiana roads are rated as being in poor, mediocre, or fair condition. There are two primary reasons for this situation. First, a growing Indiana population means more drivers and higher road use, causing more wear and tear on the roads. Second, over the years, funding for highways has persistently lagged far behind the amount needed just to maintain top condition. The combination of these two forces—more drivers and less money—has made the upkeep of our highways difficult.

The concern is that without greater investment in our transportation system, the long-term prospects for our economy will suffer. The global competitiveness of our economy depends in large part on the efficiency of our infrastructure, especially transportation. Our ability to move goods and services to market must be second to none.

FUNDING INCREASES

The bill will benefit Indiana in two important ways. First, the bill boosts our overall share of federal highway funds. Under the old highway formula, Indiana and other so-called "donor" states were paying in more in go as taxes than what they were receiving in federal highway funds, and were thereby subsidizing highway spending in other "donee" states. In particular, Indiana was getting back about 78 cents from every dollar of gas pump taxes. The new highway bill, however, changes the formula so that every state is guaranteed a 90.5% return in highway funding on gas taxes paid by the state. Indiana's share under the new bill equals about 91%.

Second, the highway bill increases overall funding for the federal highway program by 40% over current levels. It provides \$204 billion over six years for all transportation programs, including \$167 billion for highways. As a result of the new formula and the bill's higher spending levels, Indiana will receive an average of \$617 million annually, which is a 52% increase over the approximately \$405 million Indiana received on average from 1992-1997. This increased funding will likely accelerate major highway and bridge projects in southern Indiana and throughout the state.

The bill will benefit our state and the nation in other ways as well. Mass transit projects, including commuter rail and bus systems, will receive at least \$36 billion over six years. Also, a total of \$500 million in grants has been set aside for states which implement anti-drunk driving initiatives.

SOUTHERN INDIANA PROJECTS

Passage of the highway bill will help meet the infrastructure needs of southern Indiana